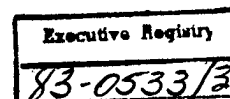


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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505



D/ICS-83-0623
7 February 1983

Mr. Charles Z. Wick
Director
United States Information Agency
Washington, D.C. 20547

Dear Charlie:

I am responding to your 21 January letter soliciting my comments on the national security aspects of large numbers of Soviet personnel entering the United States on cultural and exchange visits, including students under the IREX programs. I have also just received your letter of 2 February in which you outline discussions between your agency and the FBI on the FBI's perception of the threat represented by the increased numbers of intelligence operatives traveling to the United States with visiting Soviet groups. I share your concerns and those of the FBI in these areas and will gladly work with you to develop and utilize appropriate mechanisms for more effective controls and greater reciprocity.

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Within the Intelligence Community, as I believe you know, we have a Committee on Exchanges (COMEX) that examines proposed visits to the United States by Soviets (as well as from other communist countries) under established exchange programs, including IREX students. USIA is represented on COMEX and regularly participates in the examinations, deliberations and formulation of recommended actions. COMEX actions include recommending denial of a visit, urging modification of a visit itinerary or scope, or interposing no objection to a proposed visit as scheduled. COMEX reviews normally consider national security matters such as exposure to high technology and the risk of the visitor acquiring sensitive or classified technologies. These concerns apply to students, exchange visitors and business visitors, many of which are arranged directly with the private sector as you correctly observe. Cultural visits of the type you describe are not normally reviewed because they are outside the purview of COMEX.

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One of our largest problems is to learn about these proposed visits in sufficient time and detail to conduct a meaningful review and to initiate necessary limiting actions when undesirable features become known. This is a particular problem in the visits arranged directly in the private sector.

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I endorse your efforts to achieve strict or full reciprocity in the total range of visits, and I believe your suggested modifications to NSDD-75 were very beneficial. The remaining problem, of course, is how we achieve the objectives now stated as national policy. Visa control is certainly one way, but we have found this a difficult tool to apply without effecting major changes in current visa issuing policy. A better way to start, I believe,

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would be to compel at least the Soviets to funnel all proposals for exchange visits--private, cultural, business, students, etc.--through a central U.S. Government apparatus. This would provide us total advance knowledge of all visits, and we can devise the necessary review mechanisms to assess national security risks, balance the reciprocity concerns, and accomplish any other objectives called for in national policy. [redacted]

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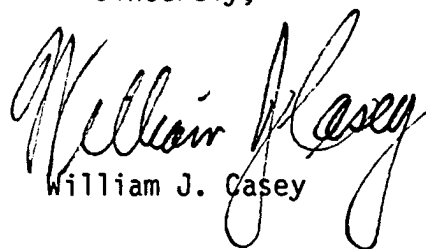
No central visit-clearing point exists in the Government, nor has there been any action to my knowledge to establish one. NSDD-75 provides the impetus to do so, however, and I am interested in pursuing this. One consideration I will look into is the appropriateness of tasking the new Office of Foreign Missions (OFM) within the State Department to take on this task. This Office is just now being established in compliance with the Foreign Missions Act signed into law in August 1982. Its primary purpose is to achieve reciprocity in the operation of foreign missions in the United States. We need to explore the applicability of this purpose to the full range of exchange visitors as extensions of the diplomatic missions to the United States. If we should find the OFM able to assume this role, the matter of visa control that you suggest could follow as a natural result. [redacted]

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In sum, I applaud your efforts to gain recognition of the full reciprocity issue, I share your concern about the imbalance of Soviet exchange visitors to the United States, and I will pursue the matter of a central point through which all visits must be proposed and cleared. [redacted]

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Sincerely,



William J. Casey

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D/ICS-83-0623/1
4 February 1983MEMORANDUM FOR: DCI
DDCI

FROM:

[Redacted]
Chief, Community Counterintelligence Staff, ICS

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SUBJECT: Response to Mr. Wick

1. Action Requested: Your signature on the proposed letter to Mr. Wick responding to his letters to you of 21 January and 2 February 1983.

2. Background: All of the concerns expressed by Mr. Wick, except perhaps for Soviet cultural and sports exchanges, have been of continuing concern to the Intelligence Community, and these concerns have been dealt with on a case-by-case basis by the Committee on Exchanges (COMEX). Additionally, the FBI has counterintelligence concerns over all Soviet exchange visits, including the cultural and sports exchanges which provide operational opportunities to the Soviets.

3. Inasmuch as Mr. Wick, in his previous efforts, has succeeded in having his concerns and policy approach incorporated into NSDD-75, it is incumbent on us to be forthcoming in suggesting means of implementing these policies.

4. Current Action: To implement the new policy effectively requires a central point in the U.S. Government where all Soviet exchange visits will be proposed initially in order that they will be known and can be reviewed and evaluated for risk, reciprocity, acceptability, etc. The response to Mr. Wick proposes exploring the feasibility of having the Office of Foreign Missions (OFM) be designated the focal point for notification of all visits. On the surface, the law establishing the OFM does not speak to a matter of this nature, but our interpretation is that it is not necessarily excluded. We will indeed explore the matter with OFM authorities and with the State Department.

5. Coordination: We have coordinated this response with TTIC/COMEX and the CI Staff of DDO who concur in the letter.

6. Recommendation: That you sign the attached letter to Mr. Wick.

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Attachment:
a/s[Redacted]
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